

REMARKS

Claims 2-7, 9-16 and 18-21 had been pending.

The claims are amended and cancelled without disclaimer or prejudice, and, thus, the pending claims remain for reconsideration, which is requested.

Claim 15 is objected to for being substantial duplicate of claim 20. Claim 15 is cancelled.

Pending claims 2-7, 9-16 and 18-21 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kihl (US Patent No. 6,222,536) in view of Kindo (US Patent No. 6,832,217).

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kihl, Kindo and Nakagawa (US Patent No. 5,835,911).

The Office Action Response to Arguments refers to Lomet, however, the Office Action rejection appears to have withdrawn Lomet and newly relying upon Kindo.

The independent claims are 14, 16, 18 and 20, which are amended to require the patentably distinguishing features of dependent claim 7 in addition to other patentably distinguishing features, namely "when a reply method to the pending inquiry is of a multi-choice selection type, sending to the first client a list of possible answers together with the pending inquiry, and when the reply method to the pending inquiry is of a text type and a subject of the pending inquiry corresponding to the first delivery request is similar to a subject of a past inquiry, retrieving from the log memory a log record corresponding to the past inquiry, and sending to the first client the retrieved log record corresponding to the past inquiry together with the pending inquiry corresponding to the first delivery request" (claim 14).

Nothing has been found in Kihl and Kindo that expressly or implicitly discloses sending to a first client a list of possible answers or a retrieved log record corresponding to a past inquiry depending on a reply method to a pending inquiry. In other words, Kihl and Kindo fail to contemplate a benefit of the invention by sending different information depending on a reply method to a pending inquiry. Further, in rejecting dependent claim 7, the Office Action relies upon Kihl, col. 7, lines 27-32. However, the cited portion of Kihl discusses 'obtaining the output screen layout file,' but does not disclose expressly or implicitly that the output screen layout file includes a list of possible answers. Thus, a prima facie case of obviousness over Kihl and Kindo cannot be established, because nothing has been cited or found, either expressly or implicitly, in

Kihl or Kindo that supports as obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine Kindo with Kihl and then further modify Kihl to provide the language of amended claim 14 "when a reply method to the pending inquiry is of a multi-choice selection type, sending to the first client a list of possible answers together with the pending inquiry, and when the reply method to the pending inquiry is of a text type and a subject of the pending inquiry corresponding to the first delivery request is similar to a subject of a past inquiry, retrieving from the log memory a log record corresponding to the past inquiry, and sending to the first client the retrieved log record corresponding to the past inquiry together with the pending inquiry corresponding to the first delivery request." Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 14 and allowance of claim 14 is requested.

Independent claims 16, 18 and 20 require limitations similar to the discussed limitations of claim 14. The remaining dependent claims inherit the patentable recitations of their respective base claims, and therefore, patentably distinguish over the cited art for the reasons discussed above in addition to the additional features recited therein.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,
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